



## McKiernan takes USAREUR, 7th Army command

Gen. David D. McKiernan (left), the new USAREUR and 7th Army commander; Maj. Gen. David P. Valcourt (center), USAREUR chief of staff; and Gen. B. B. Bell (right), former USAREUR commander; inspect assembled U.S. and NATO forces during the change of command ceremony Dec. 14 in Heidelberg, Germany. McKiernan's last assignment was as deputy commanding general and chief of staff for U.S. Army Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Ga. Bell's next assignment will be as commander, United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/U.S. Forces Korea. (Photo by Gary Kieffer, USAREUR Public Affairs)

## USAG Vicenza commander reflects on first months of command

By Diana Bahr

USAG Vicenza Public Affairs

When Col. Virgil S.L. Williams and his wife, Mary, arrived in Vicenza in August to take over command of the then-22nd Area Support Group (now the U.S. Army Garrison Vicenza), they came to a post that was undergoing growing pains of major proportions.

"I had a basic understanding of what my mission as garrison commander would be, and Colonel Don Drummer and I had discussions about the tasks I'd be taking over," said Williams. "After I took command, I discovered that I wanted to have a higher level of involvement with the many tenant organizations – schools, AAFES, clinics – than I originally thought. As the garrison commander, it's important that I work closely with these organizations to assist them in their efforts to better support the community.

"I was fortunate that Colonel Drummer left the garrison in good shape," said Williams during a recent interview for the Outlook. "He had plans in the works and in capable hands, so I was able to jump in and transition almost seamlessly."

Williams' has found his biggest challenge is one he doesn't have complete control over – and that's the amount of funding necessary to make Caserma Ederle the flagship installation he'd like to see it become.

"We have major initiatives we need to fund," he said, ticking off projects – new barracks, new schools, new government housing, to name a few. "This makes it a constant challenge to prioritize the needs of the community and to allocate what funds we do have. As the post changes and the 173d Airborne Brigade stands up as a fully functional warfighting force, we need to meet the challenges that these changes will bring.

"Unfortunately, the budget process in the government is slow-moving and, right now, we're facing severe shortfalls," Williams said.

*With the transformation of the brigade and all the infrastructure and logistics that goes along with transformation, well, I just have to ask for the community to be patient while we do the best we can with what we have.*

**Col. Virgil S.L. Williams**  
USAG Vicenza commander

"With the transformation of the brigade and all the infrastructure and logistics that goes along with transformation, well, I just have to ask for the community to be patient while we do the best we can with what we have.

"We're working hard to eliminate the 'have and have-nots' when it comes to installations across the Army garrisons," he said and stated that he is determined to see that the community receives the same levels of support and services as outlined in the Common Levels of Support set by the Installation Management Agency, under which all garrisons fall.

One of the ways Williams is able to keep his pulse on the needs of the community is through the monthly Community Action Council. A people-person, Williams feels at home when he is able to interact with the community at all levels.

"I actually enjoy the Community Action Council," he said with a chuckle. "Because I can see the positive results from many of the issues brought up. The CAC is a great way for people who don't have a chain-of-command to go through to get their issue to those who can best help them come to a resolution.

"But people don't need to wait for the monthly CAC meeting," Williams pointed out. "I strongly encourage those in the community with issues to start at the lowest level. If they

have a problem with AAFES for example, start with the store manager. If that doesn't work, go to the regional director. The same goes for all the organizations on post. Start with the first-line supervisor – don't wait and let the problem get to you."

This will be especially important as the reintegration process begins for the returning Soldiers, he emphasized. "I wasn't here when the Soldiers returned from Iraq in 2004," he said. "But I understand that we can expect challenges when it comes to parking, lines at various facilities, and more competition for services. So I ask the community to be patient and be prepared."

Williams is no stranger to the reintegration process as his assignment prior to Vicenza was in Iraq, so he understands the anxieties and emotions the Soldiers and their families have faced during the separation.

"I have tasked my staff to make the reintegration process a seamless transition for the Soldiers and all family members involved," Williams said. "I know that the previous reintegration process went very smoothly, and so I've challenged the garrison team to equal or better what they did last time. I feel fortunate



**Col. Virgil S.L. Williams**

that I have a talented staff and workforce on which I can rely and, I believe, come this spring... the community will see the results of all their hard work, too."

In the meantime, Williams will continue to be on the front lines, fighting the budget battle as he helps to ease the growing pains of this community.

### Postal rates to see first increase in four years

**USAREUR Public Affairs**  
News Release

The U.S. Postal Service has announced rates and fees will increase by approximately 5.4 percent, effective Jan. 8. This increase is the first since 2002.

Following are selected rate and fee changes:

First-class mail letter (1 oz.) – from 37¢ to 39¢; First-class mail letter (2 oz.) – from 60¢ to 63¢; Postcard – from 23¢ to 24¢; Priority mail (1 lb.) and flat rate envelope – from \$3.85 to \$4.05; Priority mail flat rate box – from \$7.70 to \$8.10; Express mail (1/2

lb.) and flat rate envelope – from \$13.65 to \$14.40; Express mail (over 1/2 lb. and up to 2 lb.) – from \$17.85 to \$18.80; Certified mail – from \$2.30 to \$2.40; Return receipt (original signature) – from \$1.75 to \$1.85; Return receipt (electronic) – from \$1.30 to \$1.35; Delivery confirmation retail (priority mail) – from 45¢ to 50¢; Delivery confirmation retail (first-class mail parcels) – from 55¢ to 60¢; and Money orders – remain 25¢.

For additional postal information, visit the USAREUR Postal Operations Directorate Web site at <http://www.1perscom.army.mil/pod>.

## Best wishes for the holiday season



As we enjoy this holiday season, I want to wish all of you in the Vicenza military community the happiest of holidays and the best in the coming year.

The holiday season is a great time to reflect on the closing year, and I extend my personal gratitude to each member of our community for your contributions this year.

It takes the commitment and support of every family member, Soldier, civilian and local national to keep our community working, functioning and thriving as we support our Soldiers and civilians downrange and our families and friends here in the Vicenza area through this difficult time of sacrifice and separation from our loved ones.

May you have a safe, fulfilling and joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

**Maj. Gen. David T. Zabecki**  
Commander  
SETAF Rear



## USAG Vicenza Civilian Awards

Wednesday at the Caserma Ederle Theater, the USAG Vicenza command recognized its employees during the quarterly civilian awards ceremony.

The following people received a Special Act Award: Roberto Maschio, Franca Tessari, Marcello Bon, Alessandro Lovato, Davide Dalla Massara, Lorenzo Farinello, Renato Traffano, and Simonetta Farisato.

The following people received a Lion Shake 06 Scroll of Appreciation: Rita Bonamego, Cristina Bowers, Sonia Jeffries, Monica La Porte, Ket White, Flavio Trevisiol, Silvio Visona, Maurizio Luca, Paul Smith, Albertina Littleton, James Beverly, Patrick Ching, Esteban Lopez, Thomas Mazzei, James Murray, Randy Stevens, Cindy Brown, and Sean Richardson.

The following people received a Certificate of Commendation: Carolyn Parse Rizzo, Stephanie Curtis, Heather Schantz, Elizabeth Sexton, Pittoon Ekarintaragun, Chanel Thomas, Margie Planas, Darryl McFarland, Kari Walling, and Jeremiah McCurdy.

The following person received a Certificate of Appreciation: Laura Poppen.

The following people received a Scroll of Appreciation: Sam Wallace, Geonte Haynes, Sally Lualemag, Christina Salas,

Christian Kennedy, Derrico Johnson, Jeff Nemeth, Mike Garcia, Robert Johnson, Angela Hartwig, Mrs. Ballard's 4th Grade Class, Mrs. Ozkurt's 4th Grade Class, Mrs. Salerno's 4th Grade Class, Mrs. Stewart's 4th Grade Class, Robert Fox, Giulia Tegtmeier, Angela "Gigi" Spencer, Kenneth Barteau, Mike Ftacek, Mike Garcia, Lenny Harris, Ana Mutter, Elizabeth Carpenter, Caroline Staplekamp-Marceau, Tamela Faulkner, Kim Parrish, Raymond Raether, Ron Grinnell, Tamara Browning, Stacey Decker, James Hawkins, Diana Baxter, Carla Balistreri, Angela Crosland, Michael Fidalgo, Frank Powell and Annette Evans.

The following people received a Certificate of Achievement: Luz Andriolo, Maggie Owens, Joy Chalmers, Larry Douglas, and Antonio Fontana.

The following people received a Commander's Award for Civilian Service: Steve Brown, Barry Robinson, and Gordana Badel.

The following Soldiers received an Army Achievement Medal: Sgt. David Ozaria, Spc. Christian S. Kelley, Spc. David Ortiz, and Spc. Delilah N. Wesley.

The following Soldier received an Army Commendation Medal: Sgt. Daniel S. Bregaglio.

The AUSA DA Civilian of the Year 2005 was awarded to Larry Kilgore.

## A special award

**Dr. Ernesto Gallo, assessor of finance for the city of Vicenza, receives an award from Darleen Sehorn, manager, American Red Cross Mediterranean Hub, for his many years of support to the American Red Cross. Gallo also was awarded a Scroll of Appreciation for his work with the Boy Scouts and his contributions and support of the Vicenza military community. Gallo served as the president of the Vicenza Italian Red Cross from 1986 to October 2005. During his tenure, he was instrumental in establishing the first emergency medical exercise in 1998, which evolved into Lion Shake, the communities annual consequence management exercise. (Photo by Navy Cmdr. Kenneth O'Brien, SETAF Rear)**

## Thinking Like a Servant

*The USAG Vicenza Chaplain's Family Life Office, in partnership with deployed SETAF and 173d Airborne Brigade chaplains, is writing a series of devotional articles based on the best-selling book, "A Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren.*

*The intent of these articles is to offer deployed Soldiers and their family members a devotional meditation which you can use for weekly discussion and to hopefully deepen your spiritual connection during the separation.*

**Chaplain (Maj.) Leon G. Kircher**  
USAG Vicenza Family Life Chaplain

*"My servant Caleb thinks differently and follows me completely."*

Numbers 14:24

Service starts in your mind. For a number of years I was the pastor of two medium-sized churches in Pennsylvania before I came back into the Army as a chaplain. They were great people and every once in awhile we'd have barbeques and sell what we cooked to the community. I like to cook, so at the next barbecue I got out and helped set up the pit and started to cook chicken and ribs, and I got really dirty.

One of my parishioners came up to me and said: "Reverend, what are you doing? You're the minister, you shouldn't

be doing that."

My immediate response was, "Why not?" It's all about serving. Being ordained doesn't make me better. It just sets me apart for a different kind of work.

Warren says it well when he writes: "Servants think like stewards, not owners."

It helps us all to remember that God owns it all in the end. To be good stewards means that we take very good care of what is entrusted to us.

It means we stay focused on our work, not wondering what others are thinking about or trying to compete. Just as the church, we in the military are all on one team. There's no place for jealousies. If you're busy serving, then you won't have time to be critical. Status symbols become unnecessary and your self worth is not measured by what you achieve.

The Apostle Paul said it well: "You may brag about yourself, but the only approval that counts is the Lord's approval." (II Corinthians 10:18)

Servants think of serving as an opportunity; not an obligation. They enjoy meeting people, meeting needs and doing ministry. By serving others you serve God, which is by far the highest use of life.

So ask yourself, am I usually more concerned about being served or finding ways to serve others?

## Community Action Council

This forum is to discuss issues that affect the community.

If you have an issue you wish to submit, visit the USAG Vicenza Web site at [www.usag.vicenza.army.mil](http://www.usag.vicenza.army.mil) and click on the Community Action Council link. This link provides you the opportunity to review issues that have been previously submitted and responded to by post agencies. There is also a form available for you to submit any new issue you would like addressed. If you have questions, call 634-5222 or 0444-71-5222 from off post.

The command encourages you to identify yourself when submitting a CAC issue in order to be able to answer your concern directly.

The command also reminds the community that CAC issues submitted containing vulgar, derogatory or inflammatory language will not be addressed.

Due to the holiday break, the next CAC meeting is Jan. 25, at 9 a.m. in the Ederle Theater.

**Issue: New vans for Youth Services sports** – *We are coming up on a new fiscal year; can we look into spending our funds to buy a more comfortable, more reliable van for the youth sports teams which travel farther than other teams for competitions?*

**Response from the Directorate of Morale, Welfare and Recreation:** We regret that the Bluebird buses used on Child and Youth Services Sports trips sometimes lack comfort and reliability. These buses are funded with appropriated funds and are provided at no cost to the CYS Sports program from the USAG Vicenza Transportation Motor Pool.

Unfortunately, TMP informed us that Bluebird buses are the only kind of buses they have for this purpose. TMP has assured us that they would make every effort to provide us with the most reliable buses in their fleet. In addition, they are investigating the long-term possibility of replacing the Bluebird buses with European-style buses.

CYS/DMWR is also looking into the feasibility of purchasing better buses by using non-appropriated funds. However, in making such a request, we must go through our IMA-Europe Headquarters for fund approval. IMA-EURO will measure the need of our request with other military communities to determine which

projects get funded.

Currently, there is a moratorium on such requests; however, we will submit the request during this fiscal year when it will be accepted.

**Issue: Living Quarters Allowance and decoder boxes** – *I would like to know how getting LQA is linked to a DoD civilian receiving a free AFN decoder box. I am a civilian employee, living in private rental.*

*I am what is considered a "local hire" and do not receive LQA, therefore I will not receive a free decoder box.*

*I do not think it is fair I have to pay more than \$400 to get a box and also find a satellite dish if there is not one on the building in which I live. I would love to be able to get the news and or watch a television program through AFN and not have to resort to subscribing to Sky network!*

**Recommendation:** Decoder boxes should be given out or rented at a minimum rate for U.S. civilian employees that live in private rental so as to ensure that U.S. nationals are able to receive news/information via AFN.

**Response from the Directorate of Public Works (Housing Division):** Vicenza is the first Army installation in Europe to field this exceptional Decoder To Home program.

The Vicenza community has fought for this over the last five years based on the fact that the terrestrial signal, which carries the local AFN channel over the air, will be suspended in early 2006.

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense gave final approval this year and priority funding provided to implement the program.

Being the first garrison to obtain this privilege, a contract had to be developed by the Vicenza Housing Division to install satellite dishes and decoders and maintain accountability for these sensitive and expensive items.

This means decoders are actually issued on a furnishings handreceipt, which eligible customers sign assuming responsibility for the item against loss or damage.

Eligible customers are also required to turn in the decoder and clear the Central Furnishings Office prior to departure from Vicenza and any loss or damage reconciled at that time.

Furnishing and appliance support is not authorized for contractor or local hire personnel and adequate clearance controls for accountability are not in place. Even if created, they would be difficult to enforce.

# Housing allowance rules to change with new year

By Donna Miles  
American Forces Press Service

About 30,000 single servicemembers who live off base and pay child support are likely to see a slight change in their military pay - an increase for some and cut for others — beginning in January.

The rules regarding the basic allowance for housing differential - an allotment for single members who pay child support — will change Dec. 31, Tim Fowlkes, the Pentagon’s assistant director of military compensation, told the American Forces Press Service.

The change is one of the last parts of a

seven-year phase-in of the basic allowance for housing that began in 1998, he explained. The BAH system replaced the old variable housing allowance system.

Under both the old law and the transition policies that have been in effect to implement BAH, single members who pay child support get a BAH differential. After Dec. 31, however, only members who live in government quarters and pay child support will continue to receive the BAH differential, Fowlkes said.

Members who live off base and pay child support will receive BAH at the “with dependents” rate. Previously, they received BAH at the “without dependents” rate, plus the BAH differential.

This “with dependents” BAH rate varies widely based on pay grade and location, Fowlkes said, so some affected servicemembers will notice a slight increase in their pay and some, a slight decrease. Those living in low-cost housing markets are the most likely to notice a dip, he said.

## A look at holiday origins Behind traditions

By Spc. Justin Nieto  
SETAF Public Affairs

Late December is viewed by many as a time of gathering with family, friends and to celebrate the holidays, and the New Year. But have you ever wondered where the various traditions for these celebrations come from?

Why do we use a Christmas tree? What does the menorah symbolize? Where did Kwanzaa originate? How have these holidays and their traditions evolved?

The answers to these questions can vary from place to place and person to person.

According to Web sites like [www.holidayorigins.com](http://www.holidayorigins.com), many traditions associated with today’s holidays are in fact composites of older practices taken from sources all over the world.

The use of a Christmas tree, for example, is considered a Christian take on a pagan belief that a tree represents the renewal of life, according to [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), an on-line encyclopedia.

The very tradition of decorating the Christmas tree is believed to have made one of its first appearances in Germany around the 16th century. Fir trees were placed in guild halls and decorated with numerous nuts, paper flowers and pretzels for the children to collect on Christmas Day, states Wikipedia.

Over time, the tradition made its way outward to France, Russia, Austria and other European countries. The tree was believed to make an appearance in the United States as early as 1777,

when an imprisoned Hessian soldier erected a Christmas tree in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, according to Wikipedia.

The menorah is a tradition associated with Hannukah, a Jewish celebration taking place over the course of eight days, starting Dec. 25, according to the Holiday Origins.

Hannukah, or the Feast of Dedication, celebrates the reclaiming of a temple in the town of Modin by Jewish rebels fighting against the changing of their traditions by Syrian King Antiochus IV.

The site says after taking the temple back, the Jewish people lit the sanctuary candle inside and although there was only enough oil to burn for one day, the candle burned for eight days.

Today, the menorah is the symbolization of the sanctuary candle burning for eight days. With nine candle receptacles, one of the candles is used to light all the others. A candle is lit one day at a time, until all are lit.

Kwanzaa, celebrated by African Americans, was actually created by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga on Dec. 26, 1966, and translates in to “first fruits of the harvest” in the Kiswahili language. It was created to give African Americans a holiday of their own, although it’s not meant to replace Christmas, and focuses on seven key principles: unity, purpose, faith, self determination, collective work and responsibility, collective economics and creativity.

These are just some of the traditions and holidays we as Americans celebrate; each with their own unique history and practices reflective of those celebrating the holidays. And, if history is any indicator, they will continue to change and evolve with the times.



### Showing his strength

Brandon Hutson, a Soldier with the Vicenza Health Clinic, squats weight during the IMA-E MWR Powerlifting Tournament hosted in Heidelberg, Germany, Nov. 19. [Sgt.] Hutson took first place in the competition in the Men’s 100kg Weight Class with a score of 635 points from the following lifts: Squat - 205kg, Bench Bress - 185kg, and Dead Lift - 245kg. (Photo provided by IMA-E MWR)

## Ready, Set, Jingle

Middle school students prepare to race Santa Claus (AKA Senior Chris Bender, Vicenza High School) at the start of the Jingle Jog in front of the school on Thursday. Santa and the students jogged around post and then Santa and PE Teacher Vera Morgan refereed a students versus teachers basketball game in the school gym. The Parents Teachers Students Association donated candy canes to the students who participated. (Photo by Spc. Justin Nieto, SETAF Public Affairs)

The Outlook

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SETAF Rear Commander

Maj. Gen. David T. Zabecki

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The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for style, brevity and clarity.

Circulation is 2,500.

A black and white portrait of a woman with blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark scarf over a light-colored top.

American Red Cross

Volunteer of the Month

The American Red Cross December Volunteer of the Month is Kristen Garrett. Garrett’s work impacts all Red Cross volunteers by ensuring volunteer information is properly entered into the organization’s database and all personal contact information is kept up-to-date.

Her work impacts the Red Cross paid staff by taking responsibility for the major monthly task of collecting, posting and reporting volunteer hours. Her work is reliable and accurate.

Her work impacts the community by accurately reporting Red Cross volunteer hours worked, which enables the AVCC to calculate the activities and services rendered in the community by Red Cross volunteers. In addition to her current role as records chairman, Garrett also serves as the secretary for the Advisory Council and is a member of the Awards and Recognition committees. She routinely volunteers for additional projects, such as the invitations for this year’s holiday social.

# Holiday Greetings From Afghanistan

To Caroline, I want to wish you all the same joy & happiness you give me daily over the holidays. You're the love of my life & leave me with everlasting smiles! Thank you, Merry Christmas to you & Ms. Paige. I love you honey.

*Sgt. 1st Class Keith Marceau, CJTF-76*

Wishing my beautiful wife, Evai, and my Babydoll, Kiana, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I'll be home soon!!! I miss you both very much and love you all even more.

*Sgt. 1st Class  
Robert Cleveland,  
CJTF-76*

To all our friends and family back in Vicenza, we hope you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Staff Sgt. Christopher Ellis  
& Spc. Jeremy Reigel,  
HHC, 173d Abn Bde*

I would like to say hello to my wife Shirley and children Nicholas, Savannah and Alexis. Merry Christmas, I love you and will see you soon.

*Capt. Robert Heath,  
Task Force Fury*

Beth and Tommy,

I love you and wish I could be there to enjoy the holidays with you. Have a Merry Christmas and I'll see you soon. Love Neal/Daddy.

*Sgt. 1st Class Nelson Wheeler, Task Force Fury*

Beth, Will, Jacob, Sam and Grace,  
Merry Christmas.

I love you and miss you!

*Maj. Phil Chambers,  
Task Force Fury*

Rachel, Sierra,  
Sarah and Jonathon,  
I miss you all so much and can't wait until February. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I love you, Daddy.

*Staff Sgt. Jonathon Brooks,  
Task Force Fury*

To my lovely family in Vicenza. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I will be home soon. - Love,

*Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Page, Task Force Guardian*

To my dear family at this wonderful time of remembering the birth of Christ, I miss and love you all tremendously.

Cathy, Sarah and Tom I'll be home soon. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Master Sgt. Gravens, CJTF-76*

Hello to wifu and babychiks,  
Love you and miss you.  
Happy Russian New Year.  
Spc. Rolando R. Flores  
14th Movement Control Bn



*Merry Christmas  
My Olushka and Mishutka!  
From your lonely husband  
and father, see you soon!*

*Maj. Merritt Lincoln  
14th Movement Control Bn*

**Sgt. Noah Edmund, Staff Sgt.  
Frank Padur, Sgt. Brian  
Meinert, Staff Sgt. Khristian  
Moeller, Spc. Alberto Zerbo,  
and all the deployed Soldiers  
of the 13th Military Police  
Company send a Happy  
Centurion Holiday greetings!**

To Brenda Lee, Ashley Morgan and Lauren Alexandria:  
I love and miss you so much and can't wait to be home with all my girls.

*Col. Gary Potts, CJTF-76*

Marzka, Junuh, Ashton Waller, loving and missing you tremendously. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas. I will be home soon!

*Staff Sgt. Jason Waller,  
CJTF-76*

**Happy Holidays! We miss you all and appreciate all that you are doing for the Soldiers.**

**From the 173d Airborne Brigade Legal Team at Kandahar Airfield**

*Staff Sgt. Naomi Wemhoff, Spc. Thomas Jarboe, and Capt. Kevin McCart*

To my wife Anna, and my children Melissa, Adam, Matthew, CJ and Joseph, I want to wish my family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I miss you all dearly and can not wait till I am home with you all again. With all my love,  
Charles I. Calabrese CJTF76

# Holiday Greetings From Afghanistan

**Merry Christmas to  
Letisha, Omarr and Malik.  
I love you.**

**Sgt. Rasheen McCallers  
173d Abn Bde**

I love you. I  
miss you. I'll be  
home soon.  
Spc. Joseph  
Johnson

*To my beautiful wife and daughters,  
I would like too take this time to thank you  
for all your love and support. You are by far  
the best Christmas Present a dad and a  
husband could ask for. I wish you all a very  
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Years.  
See you soon.*

Master Sgt. Richard C. Bryant, CJTF-76

**Yanalee & Alleysha: Feliz  
Navidad! Las amo y las extraño  
muchs pero ya pronto estaremos  
juntos otra vez.**

**Spc. Javier Nevarez-Rios, CJTF-76**

**To my best friend and wife,  
Carrie, and to our newborn son,  
Jack, I am with you in spirit,  
thinking of you everyday,  
especially during the holiday  
season. I love you!**

**Maj. Kar Klein, CJTF-76**

To my dear family at this  
wonderful time of remembering  
the birth of Christ, I miss and love  
you all tremendously.

Cathy, Sarah and Tom I'll be  
home soon. Have a Merry  
Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Master Sgt. Gravens,  
CJTF-76

**Stephanie:  
I can't wait to see  
you. Wishing I was  
there to enjoy the  
holiday's with you.**

**Capt. Joe Curtis,  
Task Force Fury**

To my wife and kids:  
I miss you and love  
you. Have a Merry  
Christmas. See you  
soon!

**Staff Sgt. Richard Smith  
HHC, 173d Abn Bde**

***Sarah Crabtree:  
Have a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year. I  
miss you and I love you. I  
will see you soon.***

**1st. Lt. Chase Crabtree  
HHC, 173d Abn Bde**

**To: Stacy and Brandon,  
I love you and I hope you  
have a Merry Christmas. I  
will be home soon.**

**Love Dad,**

**Sgt. Dustin Shackelford  
HHC, 173d Abn Bde**

**Merry Christmas to Alli, James and Kyle. I love you.  
Master Sgt. Gregory Littleton, 173d Abn Bde**

**Hi Joe, Joseph, and Jesse. I love you very  
much and hope that you have a great  
Christmas. Miss you guys.**

**Sgt. 1st Class Susana Chavez, CJTF-76**

**Catalina Guerrero, Have a  
Merry Christmas. I love you and  
I miss you. You're always in my  
thoughts.**

**Spc. John Guerrero  
HHC, 173d Abn Bde**

Wishing you and your family a  
Merry Christmas. Frederica and  
Josh, hugs and kisses from Dad.

**Staff Sgt. Daniel Pierce  
Task Force Fury**

***Lauren, Alexandra  
& Julian,  
Merry Christmas. I  
love you all and  
miss you very much.  
See you soon! Be  
nice to Grandpa.***

**Sgt. 1st Class Shawn  
Gunhus  
Strength Fusion**

**To my wife Christine:  
Merry Christmas. I love  
you, and I will see you  
soon.**

**Capt. Jack Kilbride  
CJTF-76**

To: My lovely wife dee Dee  
and beautiful daughter Lauren  
I love you and miss you! See  
you soon!

From: 1st Sgt. Randy Collins

**Greeting in Italian: Al mio dolce amore Cianci, siamo  
lontani fisicamente ma il nostro amore sara sempre in  
noi ti mando i miei auguri di natale pensando al prossimo  
anno 2006 che saremo insieme per sempre! - Tuo,  
Sgt. Maj. Ricky Hamrick, CJTF-76**

# Out & About



By Dorothy Spagnuolo

## Events in Vicenza

On Dec. 24 a puppet show for children, *Lo Schiaccianoci*, The Nutcracker Suite, will be performed in *Piazza San Lorenzo* at 4 p.m. with a repeat performance at 5:30 p.m.

The temporary ice skating rink, Ice Energy, downtown Vicenza, located behind the Basilica in the main square, is open Mondays 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 2-7 p.m.; Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 3-7 p.m. and 9-11 p.m. Entrance fee is 5 euro for adults and 3.50 euro for children. On the weekend it is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., 2-8 p.m. and 9 p.m.-midnight with an entrance fee of 7 euro for adults and 5 euro for children. Skates are available for rent at a cost of 3 euro. There is also a check-in booth for your packages at a cost of 50 cents per item. The rink closes in March.

New Year's Eve events include, in *Piazza dei Signori*, the comedian Stefano Masciarelli and the Avvanaganazzaganazzan Boys and Girl starting at 10:30 p.m. with the appearance of Miss Italia 2004 at 11:30 p.m.

The Epiphany market takes place Jan. 4-6 in the main squares of the city.

Jan. 6 at 4 p.m. in *Piazza San Lorenzo*, a show for children, *La Befana e La Principessa Viziata*, The Witch and the Spoiled Princess, will be presented. There will be a repeat show at 5:30 p.m. At 4 p.m. in the *Piazza dei Signori* see clowns, acrobats and fire-eaters.

Films in their original language are being shown at the Odeon cinema downtown. The first film in the New Year is Jan. 16 - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire; Jan. 23 - The Legend of Zorro; and Jan. 30 - Oliver Twist. Entrance fee is 6 euro.

In the main square an exhibit on contemporary architecture is taking place in the Basilica Palladiana.

Two Japanese architects, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, are in the limelight and the exhibit tells the story of their careers through a collection of original drawings, sketches, models, photographs and videos. The work of the two architects marks a new way of relating to the historical structures of the Palladian monument.

Visitors are offered an original, unusual opportunity to understand and interact with the architectural basic principles of the subject of the exhibition. Open everyday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. until Jan. 29. Closed Mondays. Entrance fee is 8 euro.

In the church of the town of Monticello di Fara, tonight (Dec. 20) at 8 p.m. the Blu Gospel group will perform.

## A medieval New Year's eve

In the town of Montagnana, province of Padova, the color to wear while ringing in the New Year is red. Red was the color worn by horsemen defending the city from Veronese attackers in medieval times. Visitors to the town over the New Year are invited to dress up in medieval costume for the festivities.

The event will be filled with people imitating medieval life. Windows will be dressed up with banners and streets will be buzzing with squires, who will set up "camp" outside the walls of the old city. Soldiers will set up old-style battle stations in front of the castle and armed horsemen will "patrol" the streets. There will also be jugglers and musicians entertaining the crowds.

The day's events will be centered around the re-enactment of the attack and successful defense of the city against the Veronese, followed by a parade from the castle to the Duomo.

Beverages will be handed out to the public and there will also be food tasting available in the medieval village.

Full information and booking for a New Year's Eve Gala in an old castle or just to take part in a medieval show of the Red Cape can be found at [www.capodannowwww.it](http://www.capodannowwww.it).

## Events in Venice

A dip in the sea on New Year's Day at Venice's Lido Beach has been classified amongst Venice's top annual attractions. A swim in the freezing-cold waters, by a handful of brave regulars last year attracted more than 2,000 spectators. The event takes place between 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Jan. 6 is the Feast of the Epiphany, where in Italy an old good witch called the *Befana* visits children who leave socks out on the eve of that day in anticipation of her goodies. It is not a surprise to find a lump of coal in th stockings of those who have been a little naughty.

On this day in Venice, a costumed boat race of over 50 men dressed as *Befana* will take place along the Grand Canal until they reach a giant stocking of the Epiphany hanging under the Rialto Bridge.

The race starts from the S. Toma area at approximately 10:30-11 a.m.

## Nativity scenes

Visit the sand nativity in Jesolo, where a team of sculptors, three each from America and Russia, and one from England, Holland and the Czech Republic, have used over 150 tons of sand to create four scenes: The

Annunciation, No room at the Inn, The birth of Jesus, and The Shepard's and their Flocks. To be seen in Piazza Marconi until Jan. 8, it's open everyday 10 a.m.-noon and 2-7 p.m. Although there is no entrance fee, contributions are accepted. Last year, euro contributed from visitors was donated to the reconstruction of a new school in Ossetia, Russia, to benefit the children of Beslan.

In the town of Scaldaferro, province of Vicenza, the hall located next to the parish church will open it's doors on Dec. 25 to visitors who would like to visit their nativity scene.

This nativity is very popular, and coach trips to see the scene are organized from all over the Veneto region. There you can walk through all the scenes, which are mechanical and watch the scenes, because of effective lighting, change from morning to night. Open everyday from 9 a.m.-noon and 2-6 p.m. until Jan. 8. After Jan. 8, open on Sundays in the afternoon until Feb. 2.

The nativity scene in the Scalabrini Institute, Bassano, has an interesting layout. Not only shown is the nativity but it starts with Adam and Eve and goes through to Pentecost. There are 31 scenes in all. Open on Sundays through the month of January, 9 a.m.-noon and 2-7 p.m. Note that it will be open everyday from Dec. 25-Jan. 6 at the same times. The Institute is located near the Alpini bridge.

Note: You will find that normally most nativity scenes that are sponsored by a church have no entrance fee, but you may find a box for donations.

## Marostica skating

In Marostica's chess square, once again this year, you will be able to ice skate. The rink is open 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.-midnight until Jan. 8. Entrance fee is 5 euro and to rent ice skates costs 2.50 euro.

The Christmas market is open every day from 10 a.m.-noon and 4-7 p.m. until Jan. 8.

## FIFA world cup

The first match to be played in the soccer World Cup 2006 will be in Munich, Germany, when the host of the games will play Costa Rica, who are in Group A, along with Poland and Ecuador. There are eight groups in all.. Italy is in group E, along with the U.S.A., Ghana, and the Czech Republic. Italy will play against the U.S. June 17 in Kaiserslautern at 9 p.m. Full information on the games, dates, and tickets can be found at [www.fifaworldcup.com](http://www.fifaworldcup.com).

should do everything for them.

Those two reasons are why AFTB came to be. In a power projection Army, where deployments are a constant, AFTB makes sense, especially today when Soldiers are deployed all over the world.

AFTB trains family members to be more knowledgeable and self confident. In addition, it trains those that choose, to be leaders in the community. AFTB will help reasonably align the expectations of the Army and its families and produce capable family leaders.

# Now Showing

## Caserma Ederle Theater

<b>Dec. 21</b>	Santa Claus 2	2 p.m.
	Serenity (PG-13)	7 p.m.
<b>Dec. 22</b>	The Greatest Game Every Played (PG-13)	7 p.m.
<b>Dec. 23</b>	Surviving Christmas	2 p.m.
	The Weatherman (R)	7 p.m.
	Lord of War (R)	10 p.m.
<b>Dec. 24</b>	The Weatherman (R)	7 p.m.
<b>Dec. 25</b>	Closed	
<b>Dec. 26</b>	Into the Blue (PG-13)	2 p.m.
<b>Dec. 27</b>	Closed	
<b>Dec. 28</b>	Dr. Suess - Cat in the Hat	2 p.m.
	Into the Blue (PG-13)	7 p.m.
<b>Dec. 29</b>	Two for the Money (R)	7 p.m.
<b>Dec. 30</b>	Chicken Little (G)	2 p.m.
	Wallace and Gromit (G)	7 p.m.
	Domino (R)	9:30 p.m.
<b>Dec. 31</b>	History of Violence (R)	7 p.m.

## Camp Darby Theater

<b>Dec. 22</b>	North Country (R)	7 p.m.
<b>Dec. 23</b>	The Exorcism of Emily Rose (PG13)	6 p.m.
<b>Dec. 24</b>	Dreamer: Inspired by a true story (PG)	6 p.m.
<b>Dec. 25</b>	Closed	
<b>Dec. 29</b>	Two for the Money (R)	7 p.m.

## Movie Synopsis

Find the synopsis of these movies at the AAFES Web site: [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com). Click on "Movie Schedules."

Admission: Adults age 12 and over \$4, children \$2.  
The Ederle Theatre box office opens one hour prior to show time.  
Tickets to blockbuster shows are presold at Baskin Robbins.

## Baseball for high school boys here in Vicenza

Palladio Baseball of Vicenza invites Caserma Ederle young men from age 14 (with their 15th birthday in 2006) to age 20, particularly high school students, to play for their association in the Italian "Under 21" league. Youth Services is looking for young men interested in joining. To play in the 2006 Italian Baseball season, players must commit to play by the end of January.

Mike Lococo, Army Career and Alumni Program, is the organizer and point of contact. He can be reached at the following: 634-7189, 347-030-7893 or [Michael.Lococo@setaf.army.mil](mailto:Michael.Lococo@setaf.army.mil) for more information.

## Donations for local animal shelter

Are you an animal lover? Have you ever wanted to help abused and abandoned animals in some way, but never knew how? Here is your chance to contribute to a local animal shelter in Marola. A collection is being taken of old blankets and linens, wool sweaters/garments, cat and dog food, plastic gloves, bleach/disinfectant, trash bags, and paper towels.

Please call Gisella at 0444-718833 or Carol Kabonick at 0444-717072 for a drop-off point. Thanks in advance from your local furry friends.

## Student teachers finish time at VES

**Audra Pierce, Aaron Rogers, Rachael Polley, Terry Pepper, Karima Keeler, Pete Melsted, students teachers at Vicenza Elementary School, are ready to assume full time teaching careers thanks to the support of their cooperating teachers here. All the students, except Rogers, are from Northern Arizona State University. Rogers is from Texas Tech. Upon finishing their programs, the students expressed their thanks to the Vicenza community. "As we say goodbye, we want to thank you for allowing us to be a part of your children's lives. Thank you, also, for your great kindness and hospitality," they wrote in a letter to the school. (Photo provided by VES)**

AFTB provides the information and skills that lead to personal and family preparedness. It enables family members to take responsibility when their sponsor is away.

If you are interested in more details about AFTB call Cynthia Giesecke at 634-8526 or 7500.

**Sgt. 1st Class Nia Hunter, 13th Military Police, Lt. Col. Michael Shinnors, 173d Airborne Brigade, and Kelley Thomas cut a cake in celebration of AFTB's 11th Birthday at the Post Exchange Friday.**

# AFTB celebrates 11 years helping families

By Cynthia Giesecke  
Vicenza AFTB Program Manager

For about 200 years, the Army has had expectations of spouses. Some of them realistic and welcome; some not-so-realistic or not-so-welcomed, and some silently implied.

Over the last few years, research from a variety of Army sources has shown that there is a real need for a program such as Army Family Team Building. Spouses from every experience level and geographical location have voiced their belief that

such training for preparedness is essential.

The research and the feedback from military spouses pointed to a need for a culture change in the Army. Therefore, AFTB developed a two-track system: one track for Soldiers and DA civilians, and one track for family members.

Research shows that family expectations of the Army has grown to such a level that people were neglecting to do many things they were perfectly capable of doing for themselves. Many believed the Army



Story and photos by Laura Kreider  
Outlook Staff



Children enjoy the first snow of the winter season in one of the 22 ski resorts in the Altopiano of Asiago.

**T**ime before the holiday season, dresses mountain towns and villages in special ways. The peaks wear their winter white coat made of snow while streets and squares put on their best Christmas decorations to glow in the darkest nights of the year.

Not too far from Vicenza, about 60 kilometers north, the *Altopiano di Asiago*, the Asiago Plateau may be an inviting destination not only for ski enthusiasts. It is still known as *Altopiano di Asiago e dei Sette Comuni*, which was formed in the 14th century, as one of the first confederations that ever existed in Italy.

In addition to Asiago, the seven communes include *Conco*, *Enego*, *Foza*, *Gallio*, *Lusiana*, *Roana*, and *Rotzo*. World War I permanently marked the area, which still houses war memorials, the most renowned is in Asiago, and war museums, such as in Canove, near Asiago.

In wintertime, the whole area attracts thousands of tourists with its 300 kilometers of cross-country ski tracks, 22 ski resorts equipped with almost 70 ski-lifts and a total of about 100 kilometers of downhill ski runs with different levels of difficulty. In each of the ski areas, instructors are available and the cost of lessons may vary according to the number of participants in the group.

Daily ski pass price may vary according to the age, but the average price for adults is around 30 euro, especially during the holiday season, which is considered high season.

Some ski resorts offer special reductions for families or weekly passes. For information about the area, call the Tourist Office located in Piazza Carli, in downtown Asiago, at 0424 464-081 or visit [www.comune.asiago.vi.it](http://www.comune.asiago.vi.it).

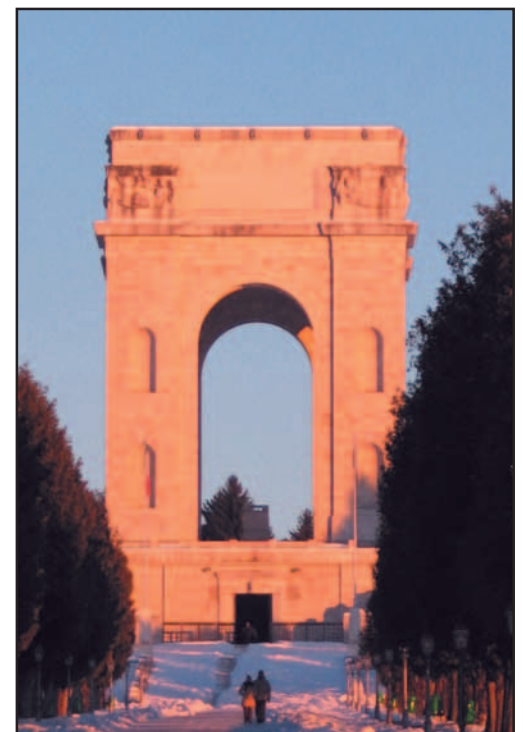


Above: Two winter views in the Altopiano of Asiago: a sun sets over the snow covered mountains and icicles hang down from a rustic house.



The *Fontana del Fauno*, Faunus Fountain, sits near the main square of Asiago. In the center stands Faunus, the Roman god of animals, surrounded by four bronze sculptures representing wild animals. The four-piece work was created in 1921 by M. Zanetti.

Right: The *Sacrario Militare*, war memorial, is the Asiago landmark visible in the distance. In this monument – completed in 1938 by the architect Orfeo Rossato – are buried about 33,000 fallen Italian Soldiers of which, more than 20,000 unknown. There is also the remains of 18,565 Austro-Hungarian Soldiers of which 12,355 unknown. The memorial houses also a museum.



At right, the Christmas Tree sits in the square in front of the Town Hall.

The square during weekends is populated by booths of specialties and traditional products, and also Santa Claus, (pictured above) who will hand out candies to children on Christmas Day and Dec. 29.



The Indoor Ice Rink in Asiago, above, and the parking (right).



**Ice Skating**  
Ice skating is one of the activities available in the Altopiano. In Asiago, located near the *Parco Margherita*, Margherita's Park, sits the *Stadio del Ghiaccio*, the indoor Ice Rink (pictured left).

During the holiday season, starting on Dec. 23 until Jan. 8, the Ice Rink is open from 10 a.m.-noon, 2:30-6 p.m. and at night from 9-11.

The entrance fee, including skate rental and

admittance, is 8 euro for adults and 6,50 euro for children younger than 15. If visitors already have their own skates, the entrance for each session is 4.50 euro for adults and 3 euro for children. Family discounts are available at the cashier.

Some sessions, only on Saturdays, may change due to hockey games, since the Asiago Team plays in the National Championship.

Other locations, not in the mountains, also offer the opportunity to ice skate, during the holidays. A couple of them are in the *Square Corte dei Bissari*, behind the Basilica in downtown Vicenza, and in *Piazza degli Scacchi* in downtown Marostica. In Vicenza, the rink is open everyday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 3-7 p.m.

On the weekends, the afternoon hours are 2-3:30 p.m., 4-5:30 p.m., 6-8 p.m. and 9-11 p.m. Entrance fee on weekdays: adults - 5 euro and children 3,50 euro. Weekend costs are: adults - 7 euro and children - 5 euro. Skates are available for rent for 3 euro. The rink closes on March 21.

In Marostica the rink is open from 10 a.m.-noon and 2:30 p.m.-midnight until Jan. 8.